

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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R 170930Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8905
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3078
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0064

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR MOPS PDIP UR CB VM LA
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR

1. SOVIET AMBASSADOR MITROFAN PODOLSKI RETURNED MY COURTESY CALL JANUARY 17, BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT HE WAS REALLY INTERESTED IN RECEIVING A BRIEFING ON THE EA CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE IN HONG KONG. I OBLIGED, DRAWING LIBERALLY ON THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN SUCH PUBLIC SOURCES AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE'S PRESS CONFERENCE, THE WIRELESS FILE, AND THE HERALD TRIBUNE.

2. PODOLSKI WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS WITH THE PRC. I EXPLAINED THAT OUR POLICY WAS STILL BASED ON THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE BUT THAT THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION HAD TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT US DOMESTIC SUPPORT FOR OUR LONG STANDING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GRC. PODOLSKI WAS ALSO INTER-
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ESTED IN OUR TRADE PROBLEMS WITH JAPAN, AND WE SPEND SOME MINUTES DISCUSSING THE INTRICACIES OF TRIGGER PRICES FOR STEEL.

3. IN RETURN FOR MY BRIEFING, I ASKED PODOLSKI WHAT HE COULD TELL ME OF THE CAMBODIAN/VIETNAMESE CONFLICT. I EXPLAINED THAT THE PROBLEM HAD BEEN MENTIONED IN HONG

KONG BUT THAT WE HAD BEEN ABLE TO COME TO NO CONCLUSIONS BECAUSE WE HAD SO LITTLE INFORMATION. PODOLSKI ALSO PLEADED LACK OF INFORMATION, BUT HE FINALLY SAID THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM WITH THE VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR TO LAOS. PODOLSKI SAID HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THE VIETNAMESE HAD AT FIRST CROSSED THE CAMBODIAN BORDER IN RESPONSE TO CAMBODIAN PROVOCATIONS BUT THAT THESE TROOPS HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM INSIDE CAMBODIA. THE CAMBODIANS HAD THEN ADVANCED INTO VIETNAMESE TERRITORY. PODOLSKI SAID THAT THE CAMBODIANS HAD COMMITTED "MASSACRES" INSIDE VIET NAM. HE SAID THAT ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE SOVIETS, NO VIETNAMESE WERE NOW INSIDE CAMBODIA.

4. PODOLSKI SAID THAT SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS THE CONFLICT WAS BASED ON A BELIEF THAT THERE HAD TO BE NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID THAT THIS LINE HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED IN MOSCOW AND IT CONTINUED TO BE SOVIET POLICY.

5. PODOLSKI THEN SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THE VIETNAMESE/CAMBODIAN PROBLEM LATER AND SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT HAD BEEN DECIDED IN HONG KONG. HE SEEMED QUITE CRESTFALLEN WHEN I EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT THE MEETING WAS A PERIODIC EVENT HELD TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND HAD NOT BEEN DESIGNED TO REACH ANY DECISIONS OR FORMULATE NEW POLICIES.
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ROBERTS

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